THE LADDER

FEBRUARY 1958

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purpose of the Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization

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Cover by Kay Somers

Your Name Is SAFE

The following article is reprinted from the second issue of THE LADDER which was published in November, 1956. It is being reprinted because the subject is still a bugaboo to many. We trust this article will help allay some fears. - ED.

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Already, with only one issue of THE LADDER published, we have run up against the fear that names on our mailing list may fall into the wrong hands, or that by indicating interest in this magazine a person will automatically be labeled a homosexual.

This is not so.

Subscribers to THE LADDER include many people from the professions - lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists, businessmen - as well as the numerous individuals who are interested in the problem, either from a personal or intellectual standpoint.

Daughters of Bilitis is not outside the law - we advocate no illegal actions by anyone. It is an organization solely dedicated to education and research with reference primarily to the Lesbian and secondarily to the entire subject of sexual variancy.

The organization has obtained legal counsel on all phases of its operation, and within the very near future will file for incorporation under the laws of the State of California. (This incorporation was granted in January, 1957. - Ed.)

As stated, our aims are simple. We are not a political organization, nor are we affiliated in any way with any group either of the past or present. It is true that

we are very deeply indebted for the advice and assistance afforded us both by the Mattachine Society, Inc., and ONE, Inc., but we are an organization distinct from both of them.

Your donation of $1.00 (Sorry, this went up to $2.50 in June of 1957 - progress, you know. - Ed.), which entitles you to receive THE LADDER for one year, means just that. It indicates your interest in a problem which is receiving more and more nationwide attention every month - it does not "label" you. Your name on our mailing list is as inviolate as the provisions of the Constitution of the United States can make it.

Our Constitution guarantees Freedom of the Press, which includes the right of all citizens to buy the books, magazines, newspapers and other publications they wish so long as these do not advocate overthrow of our government and certain other basic illegalities.

In 1953, in the case of the U.S. vs. Rumely (345 U.S. 41, 56-57) the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the right of a citizen to refuse to reveal the names of purchasers of reading material to a Congressional investigating committee.

In a brilliant majority opinion, Justice William O. Douglas said "We have here a publisher who, through books and pamphlets, seeks to reach the minds and hearts of the American people . . . Like the publishers of newspapers, magazines, or books, this publisher bids for the minds of men in the market-place of ideas . . .

"The command that 'Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press' has behind it a long history. It expresses the confidence that the safety of society depends on the tolerance of Government for hostile as well as friendly criticism, that in a community where men's minds are free, there must be room for the unorthodox as well as the orthodox views.

"Once the Government can demand of a publisher the names of the purchasers of his publications, the free press as we know it disappears. Then the specter of a Government

agent will look over the shoulder of everyone who reads."

This Supreme Court decision points the way to even stronger safeguards of a free press, a freedom which is a basic necessity of the democratic way.

The decision also guarantees that your name is safe!

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regrettable

After so many promises as to publication of "First Five" we find it hard to say again..."it will be a little while".

During January, the DOB was forced by pressures unexpected to rearrange printing methods and sources. Expenses became much greater as a result. Whether or not to publish "First Five" or to go on getting THE LADDER out, as good or better than ever was the simple choice. Funds cannot permit both at this time. We believe that continuation of THE LADDER is our primary purpose and "first Five" will keep for a while.

To those who have already paid a deposit or full price for this proposed publication, we can only say, "wait a little longer," or, if you choose, write us and we will refund your money.

"First Five" will be published. Our problem is that we can't say exactly when. Only money determines this factor and that is something that comes to us spasmodically and all too rarely. What funds we do have, we feel must go to continuation of THE LADDER for the time being rather than a re-issue.

It is only by your good wishes and your contributions that this organization exists...so please bear with us...spread the word and help us in any way that you can. Your letters, your manuscripts and your new subscriptions, as well as contributions, are the life of the publication end of the Daughters. Thank you all for what you have done and thank you for your patience with us.

-Helen Sanders
Publications Director

ONE Symposium

HOMOSEXUALITY - a way of life

Two highlights of ONE's 1958 Mid-Winter Institute held over the weekend of January 31-February 2 were a debate on heterosexual living versus homosexual living and a report from ONE's attorney on their victory with the Supreme Court. These two events are herewith reported by our Los Angeles reporter, Sten Russell.

DEBATE:- Resolved: That Heterosexual Living Is Better Than Homosexual. Chairman, Dr. W. C. Thompson.
Affirmative: Howard Russell, psychologist; Dr. Arthur Briggs, attorney.
Negative: Mrs. V. C. Vostwald, graduate student, ONE Institute; Lyn Pedersen, associate editor, ONE Magazine.

On this very fascinating topic there were really only two debaters: Howard Russell and Mrs. Vostwald. Dr. Briggs stood somewhere in the middle taking a gentle and urbane view of the subject, and Lyn Pedersen gave a very interesting lecture on the matter.

After the introduction by Dr. Thompson, Mr. Russell led off the debate with a scathing attack that seemed to leave homosexuals and homosexuality plowed under the sod forever - never to find health, sanity or happiness in a basically heterosexual culture. According to Mr. Russell and the heterosexual society he was representing, homosexuals were nowhere - biologically, physiologically or emotionally. It was absurd to think they could find happiness going against the majority. Mainly one was led to understand that homosexuals were simply sick, sick, sick - and would rather be heterosexual if they but knew how.

Mrs. Vostwald came back with an equally scathing and

brilliant counterattack. If heterosexuality was so ideal, she wished to know why there was one divorce for every four marriages in 1956; why the high rate of juvenile delinquency; why crime in general was up 40% since the war; and why one in ten of the population eventually went insane. The individual has the right to choose, to think, to find the life most satisfactory to his mental, physical and emotional needs, she claimed. All that Mr. Russell was preaching was deadly conformity. It could be conceded that heterosexuality was better for heterosexuals, but certainly not for homosexuals. "Society doesn't grow by listening to the majority on all questions," was one of Mrs. Vostwald's many rapier thrusts.

Dr. Briggs said he was disqualified for debating as he was a heterosexual and felt that was truly the best way; but on the other hand he felt that it was up to each individual to decide what was best for him. He said that we have a code of sex, morals and law that is inhuman in the last degree and that he was disturbed because he lived in a society that seemed to deny the right of choice. He admitted that heterosexual marriage could be horrible for some - ax murders testified to the fact; nevertheless he knew it could be happy too and he definitely believed that the possibility for happiness was greater in the heterosexual relationship than the homosexual. He ended his speech with the comment, "I am for homosexuality when it is just, free, good, human and entirely satisfactory to both people."

Lyn Pedersen felt that homosexuals in these days can live as happy, moral and useful a life as the heterosexuals. How many do is something else again. In homosexual living Lyn felt there should be distinctions made between the "true" homosexual who had equal relationships with members of his own sex; the "transvestites" who took pseudo-heterosexual roles in a supposedly homosexual setup; and pederasty, where one had sexual relations with children of one's own sex. When one said something was better, Lyn felt the question "Better for whom?" should immediately be asked. He felt that the matter of getting married or using another to "cure" yourself of homosexuality a very immoral thing unless one believed the medieval con-

cept that it was a foul disease. He referred the audience to the Wolfenden Report. Lyn said that love was a good thing in itself and didn't need an excuse like making babies for a justification.

There was an interim where questions were directed from the floor at the various speakers, who wrote down the questions and attempted to answer them along with their rebuttals.

In her rebuttal Mrs. Vostwald asked, "What is sin?" and answered with the statement, "The majority decides it." She cited the example that at one time slave trading was not considered a sin. She said that sin has changed and has many names in many countries.

Dr. Briggs said he felt that the heterosexual union could be the happiest relationship, but as a matter of fact it hadn't been. He said this had been due mostly to the long tradition of woman supposing to be a slave to man. He felt that until this great injustice had been wiped out, until women had progressed to where they could be as equal friends to men and vice versa, that great unhappiness would still obtain in heterosexual marriages.

Lynn said that a democratic society such as ours could only remain healthy by having a variety of expressions, including the sexual. He mentioned that in the Bible there was only one ecstatic account of heterosexual love, The Song of Solomon, as opposed to the stories of Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, and Jesus and John. In the latter the pure love for brethren was extolled. According to Lyn, Jesus had nothing good to say about heterosexual marriage except that if you already were, not to get divorced. Paul's view was an essentially negative one, that it was "better to marry than burn."

Mr. Russell, in his rebuttal, mentioned "society's clusters of expectations" and stated that "in <u>our society</u> it is undeniable that the heterosexual way is the better adjustment." He said there were no statistics on homosexual divorce, but that he was sure it was just as high; that in the case of syphilis, you didn't have to experience it to understand it. Mrs. Vostwald interjected a

growl that syphilis was a disease and therefore not comparable to homosexuality. Mr. Russell retorted that it was a debater's right to cast aspersions if he wanted to. Regarding Lyn's discussion of the Biblical characters he stated, "Love doesn't necessarily connote sex."

In the summary of the debate, Dr. Thompson said that he had been appalled at the wording of the resolution, but that the speakers had come out where one does come out: homosexuality creates a better adjustment for those who are homosexuals and is a fulfillment of their inherent natures.

ONE AND THE SUPREME COURT

Eric Julber, attorney, presented a history of the legal aspects of the printing of ONE Magazine which culminated in the January Supreme Court victory, at the banquet held in the California Room of the New Clark Hotel in Los Angeles.

Mr. Julber told how he was introduced to Dale Jennings, editor of ONE Magazine 3½ years ago, by a mutual friend and became the attorney for ONE, Inc. The legal problems of printing a homosexual magazine were very great as there was no law in this area for the depiction of homosexuality in literature, except for a very adverse opinion given in a lower court on the book "Well of Loneliness" back in the 20s. Considering this fact, they decided that the best they could do would be to lay down their own rules based on a knowledge of the intense prejudice in this area. They decided they couldn't print depictions of sexual acts between people of the same sex, even though this is standard practice today in heterosexual magazines and literature.

The magazines were printed and sent out, many by second class mail. Many times the second class subscribers did not receive their copies for two and three weeks after they had been mailed. It appeared that there was great doubt in the Los Angeles Postmaster's mind that these magazines were not "obscene" material, and copies were regularly sent back to Washington, D.C., to the Post Office

department which passes on "obscene" literature sent through the mails. It appeared that one man, Sol Mindel, read all questionable material and decided whether it was obscene or not obscene. All ONE Magazine issues were passed until the October, 1954, issue with the provocative title on the front: "You Can't Print It! - ONE's Legal Counsel". This article by Eric Julber ("The Law of Mailable Material") was intended to explain to the readers why so many of their stories, poems, etc., had to be refused and not printed in the magazine. And it was this particular issue found to be "obscene" and therefore "unmailable" by the Post Office. Thereafter it was a criminal offense even to mail that particular issue first class.

Mr. Julber filed a brief with Mr. Mindel. There was no action taken. He discussed the objectionable matter with him. What was objectionable? "Sappho Remembered" by Jane Dahr; "Lord Samuel and Lord Montague" (A New and Very BAB Ballad by Brother Grundy, Hollywood, 1954), and an advertisement for Der Kreis, a European homophile publication. Why? They were obscene. Why were they obscene? They just were. In "Sappho Remembered" there was the problem of an underage girl ("...only twenty and actually nearer sixteen in many essential ways of maturity") who chose to live and be in love with a Lesbian rather than marry an eligible young man. In "Lord Samuel and Lord Montague", well, read it. A bawdy poem at best, vulgar perhaps to some, very humorous to most, hardly obscene except to those blinded by homosexual prejudice. The ad for Der Kreis was another matter. A first class edition was subscribed for by one of the Post Office employees. It was received. Unfortunately someone connected with Der Kreis included pornographic pictures inserted between the leaves of the edition, which in itself was not objectionable. This type of irresponsibility is hardly something any publisher should be held responsible for. ONE was held responsible for it. The implications of this action could ruin any publication which accepts advertising in good faith. No publishers came to the defense of ONE.

Mr. Julber felt that the issue was not "obscene" - that there was nothing in it that "would arouse the lusts of

the reader". He wanted to appeal the case. He received a very pessimistic opinion from a fellow lawyer who felt that while the issue might not actually be "obscene" public prejudice against homosexuals was so strong that no judge would have the courage to go against it no matter what his personal opinion might be and that this fear and prejudice would extend to the very top. Mr. Julber could not believe that this would hold true in the higher courts. The case was appealed to the Federal District Court in Los Angeles with Judge Thurmond Clarke presiding, and reappealed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals of San Francisco with Appelate Judges Barnes, Hamley and Ross presiding. These latter judges found the issue to be "obviously obscene" and took ten pages to do so. Judge Barnes was upset by the line in Brother Grundy's poem "ins and outs with various scouts" that had not occurred to Mr. Julber before as being intended as a double entendre. Others were disturbed by a woman kissing a woman. Mr. Julber had not believed that irrationality would extend that far, but still believed in the U.S. Supreme Court and wished to appeal to this court no matter what the consequences. Some of the more timid members of ONE, Inc., were persuaded by Mr. Julber's eloquence on the subject and it was voted unanimously to have him appeal the case to the highest court of the land. This was done.

Mr. Julber filed a petition of Certioria, a plea to be heard (it is something of an honor even to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court). The Supreme Court is not intended as a court that dispenses "justice". The lower courts are supposed to do that. The Supreme Court is only supposed to correct serious legal errors committed in the lower courts. The Solicitor General also submitted his brief on behalf of the Post Office. Fellow lawyers' opinions varied from the "too hot to handle" class to the "not important enough to handle". Mr. Julber could hardly go along with the latter opinion. It was very important because there were no former U.S. Supreme Court decisions on homosexual life depicted in literature.

The Petition was filed in June, 1957. There was no announcement either way as to whether the case would be

heard on the October calendar. Week after week Mr. Julber checked the calendar of the cases to be heard. He began to feel that in this particular case "no news was good news". If they weren't going to hear the case they would have said so immediately in the first listings. Mr. Julber had been looking forward to arguing the case before the Court when he received word January 13, 1958, that the Court had granted the petition and had unanimously reversed the lower court decisions. They wished to hear no further argument on the matter, and no opinion was written by them setting any guides for the future in this area. This was rather disappointing to Mr. Julber, but still a cause for jubilation - for him, the homophile movement and all those concerned with free speech and freedom of the press.

A number of law schools throughout the country have requested copies of Mr. Julber's masterful brief which caused the case to be accepted by the Supreme Court. This was a great victory for a young civil liberties lawyer - to have his first Supreme Court case accepted and decided in his favor unanimously. Mr. Julber stated that while he had helped in the fight for liberty of expression of homosexual life in literature, he hoped that he could help in the future fight for the right of individuals to live the kind of life that was right for them so long as it was non-harmful to society.

After Mr. Julber finished his speech it was announced that outside of his small yearly retainer, he had done the U.S. Supreme Court case entirely without charge.

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In completing the picture of "Homosexuality:- A Way of Life", the general topic of the day, a series of round-table discussions were held simultaneously with the audience participating in which ever group they chose. Quite obviously Miss Russell could not attend all of these sessions, so through team efforts we have managed to capture the highlights of what went on.

(Continued on Page 18)

a review

GAY BAR

Helen P. Branson's candid tale of a "Gay Bar" takes you by the hand figuratively and leads you into the loves, lives and personalities of the other side of the coin. Though it deals exclusively with the male homosexual and has no direct bearing on Lesbianism per se, it nevertheless tells a much-needed story.

It is obvious that Miss Branson is not a professional writer yet, but she more than compensates for the slight literary errors by telling with fascinating humor and deep compassion (not to mention a good deal of love) the plain truths of the upper echelon of male homosexual society. That side of which is so often neglected or overlooked entirely.

This is no spiced up tale of a limp-wristed set of maladjusted and pitiable boys, but a clean honest story of the decent honorable responsible adult homosexual. This book is not fiction but fact, and undoctored fact as well. Probably the most amazing part of the book is the fact that Miss Branson is apparently one of the so-called "normal" and therefore her book is objective and not subjective. One more cheer for our side by a sincerely interested outsider.

Anyone male or female who makes any attempt to collect gay literature should include this book on his (or her) must buy list. (For how to buy it see the ad on page 26 of this issue.) A final word to those of you who do not read the literature generally because of the tone of helpless futility expressed by some of it, this book is happy and light-hearted and still retains a logical sense of balance. Read it, won't you.

- B.C.

LESBIANA

47. CONSIDER HER WAYS by John Wyndham, one of three novelettes collected under the title "Sometime, never" published by Ballantine Books, 1956-57.

A delightful story of the future world in which all man have died off due to rat poison. The society is based on a four part setup. First the hierarchy, then the amazons (the workers), then servitors, and finally the mothers of this all female race. One of the most delightful stories of feminine superiority ever written. A happy, well-integrated group of Lesbians. This is classed as science fiction but is really a feminist story.

48. DAWN BREAKS THE HEART by William Davey, Howell Soskin and Col, 1941.

The protagonist, Philip, is followed from boyhood to late 30s. He marries a very cold and very brilliant artist, a Lesbian, who taunts him constantly about her leanings. Her past life is told in retrospect. She seduces the wife of a friend of Philip and he denounces them both. She leaves her husband in the end but her ultimate fate is not revealed. Very unsympathetic but not badly written.

49. THE AUNT'S STORY by Patrick White, Viking Press, 1948.

A highly symbolic story of the disintegration of a sensitive spinster in her 30s. There are many episodes of a variant nature. The woman ends by going entirely mad from her frustrations and inhibitions. Excellent writing.

50. CITY OF WOMEN by Nancy Morgan, Fawcett, 1952.

A fairly well written story of a group of women living in Hawaii in wartime. There are a large number of Lesbian women involved but the plot is generally heterosexual. The author is not as harsh on Lesbian behavior as many others have been.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, March 7 - Gab 'n Java session at 2217 Fillmore St., 8 p.m. Informal bull session type meeting for women only.

Wednesday, March 12 - Monthly business meeting, 2174 California St., basement apartment, 8 p.m.

Sunday, March 16 - Third Annual DOB St. Patrick's Day Brunch. One of the few occasions, outside of public discussion meetings, when the men get a special invitation. Traditionally attended by members of the Mattachine Society. For anyone interested in getting acquainted with both groups this informal gathering affords an excellent opportunity. Brunch will be served between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at 3927 Army St. RESERVATIONS PLEASE! Phone VAlencia 4-2790 by March 11.

Tuesday, March 25 - Debate on Ann Aldrich's latest book, "We, Too, Must Love". Pat Scott will take the affirmative, Del Martin the negative. Since the group apparently took much delight in taking Miss Aldrich to task last year in a discussion of "We Walk Alone", we thought it would be interesting to follow through on the progress (?) of this controversial author. This should be a lively discussion! At 465 Geary St., Studio 30, 8:15 p.m.

Friday, April 4 - Gab 'n Java session at 3927 Army St., 8 p.m. Women only.

COMING IN THE MARCH ISSUE

We've been slighting our Readers Respond section lately. In March we'll print a great many of the numerous letters we've received, plus a bonus of fiction and poetry.

ACLU Is Protective Agency

CIVIL RIGHTS FOR ALL - WITHOUT EXCEPTION

That the American Civil Liberties Union is a national organization designed "to protect the civil rights of all citizens without distinction" was indeed brought home by Ernest Besig, director of the Northern California chapter, at the December DOB public discussion meeting.

He cited many instances where the ACLU has defended cases involving the infringement of such civil rights as "free speech, freedom of the press, right to assemble" for religious organizations, homosexuals, racial groups, political enthusiasts and private citizens. And throughout he emphasized that the guarantees of the Constitution should be protected for all - without distinction.

"It does not necessarily follow that we support the beliefs of all of our clients, but we do support their right to their beliefs," he pointed out.

The ACLU specializes in test cases; they have neither the funds nor the time to take all the cases that come to them for counsel. The organization is dependent upon membership dues and contributions to conduct the cases they do handle. There is no fee to the client. Annual membership is $5.00; subscriptions to the ACLU News are $1.50. The Northern California headquarters are located at 503 Market St., San Francisco.

It was fitting that this particular meeting was held at the time of the 166th anniversary of the final ratification of the Bill of Rights. As Mr. Besig pointed out, all too few of us are familiar with this document, and it is well that we from time to time assess the state of our constitutional liberties and rededicate their ideals.

NOTICE - COMING MARCH 3, 1958

A new complete translation of the poetry and all of the fragments of poetry of Sappho. SAPPHO: A new translation by Mary Barnard. Paperback edition, $1.25. University of California Press, Berkeley 4, California.

(Continued from Page 13)

THE LESBIAN PARTNERSHIP

1. The "butch" and "femme" tradition
2. Drinking
3. Finances
4. Social life

For the purpose of discussion terms were defined so that it would appear the "butch" is the epitome of masculinity while the "femme" is the ever-livin' end as a womanly woman. Most of us know that these extremes constitute only a small minority of the Lesbian culture pattern.

The group agreed that it would be better to use the term "custom" rather than "tradition" for the topic's consideration. Geographic conditions seem to have an effect on the custom as well as financial and working conditions. It would appear that the act of setting up a pseudo-gender classification is a matter of imitation of the heterosexual background of the Lesbians and this system is frustrating and embarrassing to those who cannot conform to the pattern.

It was apparent that some of the girls were not aware of the degree of stigma the "non-conformist" in gay society may be under, while others had felt the full fury of it. For the most part Lesbians maintain partnerships with varying degrees of dominant-passive roles wherein the picture may change as need demands . . . much the same as in heterosexual relationships. It is the individual who sets the tone and the expression of that individuality on all levels that makes for reasonable adjustment to marriage.

We were unable to determine why the subject of "drinking" was assigned to this group unless it had to do with the statistics of the major cities in California showing women to be pretty active in the alcoholic consumption increase. According to Helen Branson, author of the book "Gay Bar", the Lesbian makes a poor customer. She

either has other interests, drinks at home, or can't afford to patronize a bar as a regular thing. It would appear that the Lesbian is less of a problem alcoholically than the heterosexual. Psychologists have taken a fairly firm stand that alcoholism as a whole in both men and women is tied in with latent or repressed homosexuality.

Financially it is advantageous for women to live together, regardless of their sex life. Accordingly, the Lesbian partnership helps to increase security. However, it was agreed that in most cases it would be better for both parties to work rather than to have an arrangement more closely approximating husband and wife because each party to the Lesbian partnership is by her nature a person desiring independence and fulfillment of her own ambitions.

Social life of Lesbians varies in its methods and enjoyment as much as any other group's. For some it is easier to confine these activities to the homosexual area. For others it is necessary and pleasing to join with the heterosexuals in work, parties, discussion and other forms of recreation. The manner in which a homosexual will adjust to the world in general is largely determined by her previous background and adjustment. For those to whom it is difficult the privilege should be to choose that which is easier.

THE OLDER HOMOSEXUAL

1. Gerontology - newest "life science"
2. Single living - social life
3. The partnership
4. Finances

Everyone will become a "gerontocrat" someday, if he or she lives long enough. Steering one's existence in these older years can be a problem, particularly if the individual has failed in his early and middle years to prepare for the time when the calendar as well as his friends will call him or her an old man or woman. This problem is acoute for everyone; the prospect is even dimmer for most homosexuals. It is neither hopeless nor unavoidable.

At universities such as Michigan State, gerontology, the

scientific study of the phenomena of old age, is a subject that is taking on increased importance. In essence, the experts are urging people from 35 on to prepare now for their living pattern from 60 up.

Dr. M. C. Thompson, dean emeritus of ONE Institute (Education Division of ONE, Inc., offering graduate courses in homophile studies), was the one person present who had completed most of his three-score-and-ten years, and therefore could speak subjectively and objectively on age as an adjustment factor.

"Age is not an automatic adjustment," Dr. Thompson said. "It just doesn't work that way - the majority over 70 remain maladjusted if they were so before." Probably less than 10% of the people over 70 are independent, he said, and this lack of independence makes their lives miserable for themselves and others. The adjustment pattern for declining years must be solved early and continuously.

Economic security is of top importance, but is incomplete without a mortgage-free home. Finally, companionship - preferably from associations formed early among contemporaries - completes the picture of independence that will ward off frustration and loneliness.

The group suggested that homophilic organizations might fill a role in which older men and women served the younger homophiles as companions, teachers, advisers and ideals. The oldster, because of his experience, has much to offer youth, and these values can substitute for physical needs.

This is not to say that sex becames a room closed off at a certain age. Active sexual lives can and do continue into the upper years for those who maintain good health, build companionship, independence and security, and who surmount their frustrations, anxieties and purely selfish desires with an active interest in others and a continued program of learning and living.

SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS GET MARRIED?

1. Will it aid adjustment?
2. Is it fair to the other partner?

3. Is bisexual living desireable?
4. Will it harm the children?

The general feeling was that adjustment of a homosexual to a heterosexual marriage would be difficult if not impossible. However, each person varies in the degree to which he has homosexual and heterosexual impulses and potentialities for adjustment. Conversely, since we are living within a monogamous culture, leading a double love life may lead to difficult personal adjustment. It was generally agreed that for a homosexual to marry without informing the betrothed of his or her homoerotic needs was unfair.

Bisexual living seems to be an ideal but impractical form of adjustment in our culture. No one could think of a single example of a happy, adjusted person who was capable of being truly faithful to both camps at the same time.

Since a child is a product of his family and his culture, it was the general feeling that the children of a union of one or two homosexual parents would probably end up with more problems than would be their lot under normal circumstances.

DO HOMOSEXUALS HAVE COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES?

1. Does everyone have social obligations?
2. As members of a minority are there special obligations?
3. Should we obey "bad" laws?
4. Should homosexuals police their own group?

While a few stalwart participants interjected vehemently that homosexuals as private citizens should take part in community affairs (not the least of which was to exercise the right to vote), the majority tended towards a discussion of how to educate the public and erase the stigma attached to homosexuality. The feeling as to education of the stereotype into an acceptable mode of behaviour was that there is a lunatic fringe in every movement and that time and effort could better be used towards disseminating information and influencing legislation. It was agreed that there was a need for social frankness - not the evangelistic type, but certainly a positive, open

scientific study of the phenomena of old age, is a subject that is taking on increased importance. In essence, the experts are urging people from 35 on to prepare now for their living pattern from 60 up.

Dr. M. C. Thompson, dean emeritus of ONE Institute (Education Division of ONE, Inc., offering graduate courses in homophile studies), was the one person present who had completed most of his three-score-and-ten years, and therefore could speak subjectively and objectively on age as an adjustment factor.

"Age is not an automatic adjustment," Dr. Thompson said. "It just doesn't work that way - the majority over 70 remain maladjusted if they were so before." Probably less than 10% of the people over 70 are independent, he said, and this lack of independence makes their lives miserable for themselves and others. The adjustment pattern for declining years must be solved early and continuously.

Economic security is of top importance, but is incomplete without a mortgage-free home. Finally, companionship - preferably from associations formed early among contemporaries - completes the picture of independence that will ward off frustration and loneliness.

The group suggested that homophilic organizations might fill a role in which older men and women served the younger homophiles as companions, teachers, advisers and ideals. The oldster, because of his experience, has much to offer youth, and these values can substitute for physical needs.

This is not to say that sex becomes a room closed off at a certain age. Active sexual lives can and do continue into the upper years for those who maintain good health, build companionship, independence and security, and who surmount their frustrations, anxieties and purely selfish desires with an active interest in others and a continued program of learning and living.

SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS GET MARRIED?

1. Will it aid adjustment?
2. Is it fair to the other partner?

3. Is bisexual living desireable?
4. Will it harm the children?

The general feeling was that adjustment of a homosexual to a heterosexual marriage would be difficult if not impossible. However, each person varies in the degree to which he has homosexual and heterosexual impulses and potentialities for adjustment. Conversely, since we are living within a monogamous culture, leading a double love life may lead to difficult personal adjustment. It was generally agreed that for a homosexual to marry without informing the betrothed of his or her homoerotic needs was unfair.

Bisexual living seems to be an ideal but impractical form of adjustment in our culture. No one could think of a single example of a happy, adjusted person who was capable of being truly faithful to both camps at the same time.

Since a child is a product of his family and his culture, it was the general feeling that the children of a union of one or two homosexual parents would probably end up with more problems than would be their lot under normal circumstances.

DO HOMOSEXUALS HAVE COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES?

1. Does everyone have social obligations?
2. As members of a minority are there special obligations?
3. Should we obey "bad" laws?
4. Should homosexuals police their own group?

While a few stalwart participants interjected vehemently that homosexuals as private citizens should take part in community affairs (not the least of which was to exercise the right to vote), the majority tended towards a discussion of how to educate the public and erase the stigma attached to homosexuality. The feeling as to education of the stereotype into an acceptable mode of behaviour was that there is a lunatic fringe in every movement and that time and effort could better be used towards disseminating information and influencing legislation. It was agreed that there was a need for social frankness - not the evangelistic type, but certainly a positive, open

approach. It was conceded, however, that our own economic independence must be established before we can go forward. Entering the field of civil service was to be discouraged as fear of one's job would necessarily hamper activities in the move for social reform. And solidarity and unity of numbers is necessary before any such movement can hope to bring any influence to bear. As for present laws that are directed at the homosexual, it was suggested, "Conform to laws publicly. Privately? Do the best you can."

PROMISCUITY: WRONG OR RIGHT?

1. Religious views
2. Is it a psychological or biological necessity?
3. Social and legal dangers
4. Can it hold a partnership together?

The moderator began by using the Webster's definition, leaning heavily toward the word "indiscriminate". Promiscuity: indiscriminate distribution, application, intercourse; irregular, casual standards.

In the area of religion it was observed that Jesus made no statement on sex directly. The "vow" or "pledge" is the concern of the concept of sin. Only in connection with a promise does a moral issue enter in. Sex was not incorporated into the moral system until the Judaic system, and there the concept of sex existed as a concern of the ethical area rather than a part of doctrine. Our personal views will no doubt conflict with the views of the Church, but the Church is not necessarily the proper and true spokesman for the religion.

The question "Is promiscuity a psychological or biological necessity" achieved little comment other than that some people held it is possible to live without sex entirely and others felt that for the single homosexual promiscuity was the only outlet . . . not to be interpreted necessarily as promiscuity if the element of "indiscrimination" were part of the qualification.

The social and legal dangers of promiscuity were held to be obvious. The relationship of fear to necessity was discussed but it was not determined why a man will pocket his

fear for a pick-up. Increase in the vehereal disease rate was said to be up 6% in 1957 over 1956 in male partnerships.

A good partnership needs to bring completion to the individuals and promiscuity limits the opportunities for probing the depths of belief and thought and making a real marriage. There can be no love in constant promiscuity, only animalistic satisfaction and the person living by such standards has an unstable and unfulfilled life.

Readers Respond

"It's a good thing I didn't send you my review of Ann Aldrich's new book. I thought it sensational rubbish. So she's Vin Packer - I'm not surprised. The old proportion of 90% prurient, peepshow pandering and 10% prissy preaching, as in 'True Confessions' and/or 'Confidential'. But it's a question of preference, I guess. (Gold Medal books tend toward sensationalism under the banner of 'fearless honesty' anyhow!)"

M. B., Rochester, Texas

The review in the January issue of THE LADDER read, "Miss Aldrich has obviously matured in the three years between appearances of her two books under this pseudonym." And because Miss Aldrich is such a controversial writer on the Lesbian theme, the March DOB public discussion meeting will be devoted to the pros and cons of her latest book, "We, Too, Must Love". See Calendar of Events for time and place. -ED.

* * * * *

"Some time ago, when I first received THE LADDER, I sent a note congratulating you on a fine publication. That note was a bit premature, since I now believe with each issue being better than ever, you have put out something that is really educa-

tional and entertaining - to sum it up in one very over-worked word - 'Fabulous'."

G. T., Cleveland, Ohio

* * * * *

"The lines 'i love her' by Elva Ann Sohmolke are sweet. They strike a chord that vibrates; they breathe love, truth and cleanness. Elva either has a very happy gift (as to language) or she was especially inspired when she wrote them."

F. B., Sacramento, Calif.

The piece referred to here appeared in the January issue of THE LADDER. Copies are still available at 50¢ each. -ED.

* * * * *

"I loved your cover on the January issue. The Marion Zimmer Bradley list is a good public service, glad to hear of it. I am also glad you are reprinting the article, 'Your Name Is Safe'. I think it will increase your circulation.

"The lengthy article by Leo Zeff was very good. I read it through a number of times. Your magazine has improved to the point where I feel that more than the Lesbian audience will begin to appreciate it. Since a certain amount of ultimate acceptance by the heterosexual world is a goal, this magazine is a milestone."

G. D., Kansas City, Kansas

* * * * *

"Your contemplation of a New York and/or New England chapter is good news. As far as I know, there has never been any group like or similar

to DOB this far in the East, though there was some sort of short-lived organization in Chicago years ago, so I'm told. I sincerely hope you don't run into any opposition in this area. Puritan spirits are still roaming the countryside and they really have a tight hold on the reins. I can think of only one thing that would upset them more: a nudist colony! Or a new Grace Metalious novel. ..."

D. D., Hudson, N. H.

• • • • •

"The article on 'Religion and Depth Psychology' in the January issue was most interesting. I am glad to see you including material of a 'general' nature and getting away from strict adherence to 'THE theme'. Let us see more!"

K. D., San Francisco, Cal.

• • • • •

"I want to tell you how pleased I am at the way you presented my article on 'Religion and Depth Psychology' in your January issue. You must have done some excellent editing because it looks a great deal better and reads easier in your magazine than it does in my manuscript. The section headings were appropriate and well selected.

"As I've mentioned to you before, I am in the process of completing another work on religion and psychology, one of quite a different nature. I expect to have it in pretty good shape to talk about by April or May, and I would be happy to have the chance to talk to your group about it if you are interested. If you are, please let me know so we can arrange a convenient date to both of us. I believe this newer work is far better than the one I gave to your group recently. I hope

you continue to succeed and grow at the same rate and quality as you have so phenomenally in the past."

Leo J. Zeff, Berkeley, Calif.

As you can see in the preceding letters, comments on your article have been quite favorable. The group would certainly enjoy meeting with you again - the subject is of particular interest to the majority in this "minority" group. And one girl said she'd gladly welcome another chance to take her shoes off! -ED.

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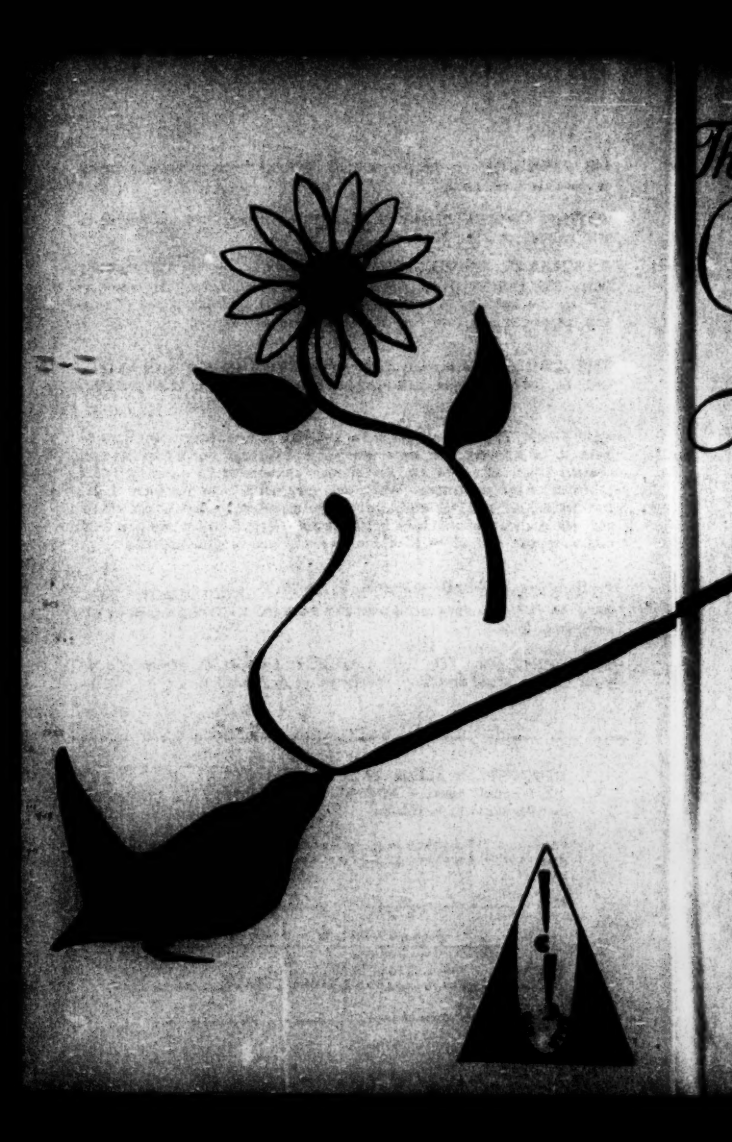
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